

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

Communications and Marketing Policy

1. Introduction

This Strategy is designed to guide the Town Council's Communications and Marketing activities over the coming months and years.

Communications activity is a key driver in public perception of overall Council performance. Research shows that keeping residents informed, listening to their concerns and involving them when making decisions has a significant impact on their satisfaction with the Council and its services.

Marketing techniques are an integral part of a forward looking communications strategy. If it is to be meaningful and have some longevity, the communications and marketing strategy must reflect the corporate aims and priorities of the Council. It will also reflect the principles set out in the Equalities Policy, Information and Data Protection Policy and Customer Care Policy as well as being a vehicle for the delivery of other Council policies.

2. Background

The Town Council's Corporate Plan 2013-14 gives the main areas of promotion as:

- The Town - Promotion of the Town to attract day visitors, shoppers and tourists
 Promotion to attract people looking to live in the Town
 Promotion to businesses looking to invest in the Town
- The Council- Statutory and other information to help residents and businesses understand its decision making.
 Marketing its services to ensure accessibility for all and to maximise income.

Key priorities for the coming year will be:

- Continuous development of the Town Council's award-winning web-site
- Increasing the town's on-line presence and twitter account
- Marketing the Town Hall to increase usage
- Promoting Congleton as a visitor attraction
- Promoting the Link Road, Public Realm Strategy and other initiatives supported by the Council,
- Supporting events for the town such as the Food and Drink Festival, Parklive, Mercian March, Arts Festival, Jazz Festival and Christmas Lights
- Working with Cheshire East and service providers on boosting Congleton's tourism offer.
- Supporting initiatives to increase the attractiveness of the Town Centre.

3. Communication and Marketing Strategic Objectives

Vision – “to enhance Civic Pride and the image of Congleton by communicating openly and effectively with the Council’s various audiences”

We aim to:

1. Improve two way communications with our stakeholders; to have an understanding of what they want, consult with them and listen to their views
2. To increase involvement and interest in Council activities and to engage the public in the democratic process
3. Ensure the Council receives a higher level of recognition for its achievements and promote its reputation
4. Ensure that Council’s communications are accessible and timely, taking into account hard to reach groups and people with disability.
5. Establish our website as a top Congleton site
6. Maximise income for the Council’s commercial services

These strategic objectives will inform the Council’s approach to public relations, design, marketing, customer care, consultation, and website.

4. Stakeholders/key audiences

The stakeholders/key audiences of Congleton Town Council are:

- Residents
- Members
- Partners within the public sector (Cheshire East Council, PCT, Police etc)
- Special interest groups including those with language or disability needs
- Business community
- Voluntary/community organisations and groups
- Schools
- Press/media -(mainly Chronicle, Cheshire Independent, Silk FM, Signal FM and Radio Stoke, Beartown FM, Canalside Radio, Moorlands Radio, Congleton Effective Directory - but could potential attract regional or specialist media for some areas)
- Town Council employees
- Potential user groups

6. Principles

The following principles will be adopted in all communications:

- Integrity and honesty
- Clarity
- Openness and accessibility
- Inclusiveness
- Listening and responding
- Accountability
- Consistency
- Accuracy

8. Primary publications and communications media

The following are the primary publications and communications media used by Congleton Town Council

8.1 Publications

Bear Necessities; The Town Council and Community Groups newsletter, published 4 times a year and delivered to 11,500 households through door to door delivery. Print run 12,000 Also available in the library and Tourist Information Centre and sent out to schools and MP.

Agendas, reports and minutes: Are sent to the press, the Burgesses and councillors. Public copies are available in the Tourist Information Centre, the Information Point of the Library and Noticeboards. Agendas and Minutes are also uploaded on to the web.

Town Guide: produced every other year. Congleton Town Council retains editorial control. 8,500 copies to be distributed via estate agents, tourist outlets, leisure facilities etc. Next edition due 2014.

Publications/leaflets: Annual Report, Strategy Documents, Shopping Guide, Christmas flyer, Come to Congleton leaflet.

Noticeboards: The Town Council updates seven community notice boards. These are updated every Monday by the Town Handymen.

1. West Heath Shopping Centre –
2. West Street Car park
3. Bus Station, Market Square
4. St John's Road, Buglawton
5. Parnell Square, Bromley Farm
6. Mossley Village Hall
7. Canal side noticeboard – off Canal Street

Cheshire East Publications

PACE – the Partnership Newsletter is produced as an on-line publication every other month. The Town Council regularly contribute to this publication.

8.2 Media Relations

Press releases and feature material: Produced through the Town Centre and Marketing Manager,

Media statements: These are mostly reactive and cleared with the Chief Officer

Advertisements: produced for information, promotional and recruitment purposes and to meet statutory requirements (e.g. public notices).

8.3 E: Communication

Town Council Website: www.congleton-tc.gov.uk is major vehicle for informing local people about local events.

The town council also provides www.mybeartown.co.uk with information and updates the real

E-mails: We have a growing database of groups and organisations and this can be an effective method of getting out messages quickly.

Twitter: The Council updates @Congletontown twitter account. In 2013/14 the number of followers should be over 1,000.

8.4 Face to Face

Annual Town Meeting: Chance for residents to hear an update on events for the town and to give comments. Once a year before the end of May

Surveys and Market Research: Previously these have largely been conducted through the Congleton Partnership and via close working with Manchester Metropolitan University Business Unit.

8.5 Through Close working with Congleton organisations

These include:

Congleton Business Association

Congleton Community Projects

Congleton Partnership

Congleton Sustainability Group

East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce

Friends of Congleton Park

Pub Watch

Shop Watch

Team Congleton 2012

The Bear Team

The Congleton Community Education Partnership

The Youth Council

8.6 Events/Opportunities in 2013

Wedding Fayres – March and October
Mayor Making – Thursday 13 May
Opening the Paddling Pool - Saturday 29 May – (until Sunday 5 September)
Mercian March – 14 June
It's a Knockout - June
Food and Drink Festival – Sunday 16 June
Tasty Town Week 16=23 June
Teddy Bears Picnic – 21 June
Civic Parade – tbc
Parklive 12-13 July
Civic Pride Competition – Summer 2013 (awards early October)
In Bloom Competition – Summer 2013 – (awards October)
Jazz and Blues Festival 24-25 August
Open day for town treasurers – Heritage Week September
Arts Festival – 27-29 September
Concerts in the Park - through the summer
Sports Awards - October
Christmas Lights Switch on Friday 22 November
Icerink – December

Ongoing

Giving Grants – ensuring the Town Council gets publicity from the organisations benefiting from our grants
Congleton Partnership
Team Congleton/Active Congleton
Events with partners

8.7 Internal

Project Update Sheet - once a month – 1st Wednesday of the month

8.8 Branding

The following should all clearly be identifiable as from Congleton Town Council and contain the Town Council Logo

- Letter headed paper
- Compliment slips
- Purchase orders
- Business cards for Councillors and key staff
- Fax header sheets
- Public notice advertisements

The following should be clearly identifiable as Congleton Town Council:

- Handyman Van
- Offices
- Litter-pickers and other equipment for hire
- Staff uniform – handyman, town hall staff and paddling pool staff

8.8 Accessibility

Our contact details should always be kept up-to-date and freely available to make it as easy as possible for people to contact us via email, phone or fax. The office is staffed Monday – Friday 9-5pm.

9. Commercial Activities (separate plan)

The Town Hall is a flag-ship service for the Town Council. It is a major asset in need of better marketing to increase weekday bookings. Wedding and weekend bookings have been increasing through better promotion on the website and via Wedding Fayres.

Research is on-going into similar halls to establish best practice. Future potential markets for the building also need to be considered, as will local competition, pricing policies, promotions and improvements to the product.

A customer satisfaction is gained after events to gain a better understand the current and recent users needs and expectations.